

The Crisis of Our Time

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I am naturally moved by the kind remarks made about me, but I would only like to make one brief comment. I am not as gentle as my friends would like to present me; surely my enemies would agree with me on that point. To come nearer to my subject, the two lectures which I am supposed to give tonight and tomorrow are, in fact, a single lecture, the theme of which is the crisis of our time and the crisis of political philosophy. It would have been possible to draw the line between the two lectures at very different points, and perhaps I have not drawn it in the best way. So, I ask you for your forgiveness if this lecture is fragmentary; it is meant to be incomplete. The subject is more precisely, "the crisis of our time as a consequence of the crisis of political philosophy."

The crisis of our time, which is the point I want to develop, has its core in the doubt of what we can call "the Modern Project." That modern project was successful to a considerable extent. It has created a new kind of society, a kind of society that never was before. But the inadequacy of the modern project, which has now become a matter of general knowledge and of general concern, compels us to entertain the thought that this new kind of society, our kind of society, must be animated by a spirit other than that which has animated it from the beginning. Now this modern project was originated by modern political philosophy, by the kind of political philosophy which emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries. The end result of modern political philosophy is the disintegration of the very idea of political philosophy. For most political scientists today, political philosophy is not more than ideology or myth.

We have to think of the restoration of political philosophy. We have to go back to the point where the destruction of political phi-

losophy began, to the beginnings of modern political philosophy, when modern philosophy still had to fight against the older kind of political philosophy, classical political philosophy, the political philosophy originated by Socrates and elaborated above all by Aristotle. At that time, the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns took place, which is generally known only as a purely literary quarrel in France and in England, the most famous document in England being Swift's *Battle of the Books*. It was, in fact, not merely a literary quarrel. It was fundamentally a quarrel between modern philosophy, or science, and the older philosophy, or science. The quarrel was completed only with the work of Newton, which seemed to settle the issue entirely in favor of the moderns. Our task is to reawaken that quarrel, now that the modern answer has been given the opportunity to reveal its virtues and to do its worst to the old answer for more than three centuries. In order to carry conviction, I must remain as close as possible to what is today generally accepted in the West. I cannot start from premises which today are agreed upon only by a fairly small minority. In other words, I have to argue to a considerable extent *ad hominem*. I hope this will not create a misunderstanding.

To avoid another kind of misunderstanding, I shall first give a sketch of tonight's lecture. The crisis of the West has been called the decline of the West, in the sense of the final decline of men. This view is not tenable, but one cannot deny that a decline, that some decline, of the West has taken place. The West has declined in power most obviously; its very survival is now threatened. This decline, however, does not constitute the crisis of the West. The crisis of the West consists in the fact that the West has become uncertain of its purpose. This purpose was the universal society, a society consisting of equal nations, each consisting of free and equal men and women, with all these nations to be fully developed as regards their power of production, thanks to science. Science to be understood as essentially in the service of human power, for the relief of man's estate. Science would bring about universal affluence. A state in which no one would have any longer any motive for encroaching on other men or on other nations. Universal affluence would lead to the universal and perfectly just society, as a perfectly happy society.

Many Western men have become doubtful of this project by the self-revelation of Communism as immensely powerful and as radically antagonistic to the Western notion of how this universal and just society should be established and managed. The antagonism between the West and Communism leads to the consequence that no possibility of a universal society exists in the foreseeable future. Political society remains for the foreseeable future what it always has been, particular society, society with frontiers, a closed society, concerned with self-improvement. This experience which we have had requires,

however, not only a political reorientation, but also a reorientation of our thoughts regarding principles.

I mention here three points. First, is this particularism, or differently stated, this patriotism, not in itself better than universalism or globalism? Second, is it reasonable to expect justice and happiness as a necessary consequence of affluence? Is affluence even a necessary, although not a sufficient, condition of virtue and happiness? Is there not some truth in the notion of voluntary poverty? Is even involuntary poverty an insurmountable obstacle to virtue and happiness? And third, is the belief that science is essentially in the service of human power not a delusion, and even a degrading delusion? Now, let me begin.

The assertion that we are in the grip of a crisis is hardly in need of proof. Every day's newspapers tell us of another crisis, and all these little daily crises can easily be seen to be parts, or ingredients, of the one great crisis, the crisis of our time. The core of that crisis, I submit, consists in the fact that what was originally a political philosophy has turned into an ideology. That crisis was diagnosed at the end of World War I by Spengler as a going down or decline of the West. Spengler understood by the West one culture among a small number of high cultures. But the West was for him more than one high culture among a number of them. It was for him the comprehensive culture, the only culture which had conquered the earth. Above all, it was the only culture which was open to all cultures, which did not reject the other cultures as forms of barbarism, or tolerate them condescendingly as underdeveloped. It is the only culture which has acquired full consciousness of culture as such. Whereas culture originally meant the culture of the human mind, the derivative and modern notion of culture necessarily implies that there is a variety of equally high cultures. But, precisely since the West is the culture in which culture reaches full self-consciousness, it is the final culture; the owl of Minerva begins its flight in the dusk. The decline of the West is identical with the exhaustion of the very possibility of high culture. The highest possibilities of man are exhausted. But men's highest possibilities cannot be exhausted as long as there are still high human tasks, as long as the fundamental riddles which confront man have not been solved to the extent to which they can be solved. We may, therefore, say — appealing to the authority of science in our age — that Spengler's analysis and prediction is wrong. Our highest authority, natural science, considers itself susceptible of infinite progress. And this claim does not make sense, it seems, if the fundamental riddles are solved. If science is susceptible of infinite progress, there cannot be a meaningful end or completion of history. There can only be a brutal stopping of man's onward march through natural forces acting by themselves or directed by human brains and hands.

However this may be, in one sense Spengler has proved to be

right. Some decline of the West has taken place before our eyes. In 1913, the West — in fact, this country together with Great Britain and Germany — could have laid down the law for the rest of the earth without firing a shot. For at least a half century, the West controlled the whole globe with ease. Today, so far from ruling the globe, the West's very survival is endangered by the East, as it has not been since the beginning. From the *Communist Manifesto*, it would appear that the victory of Communism would be the complete victory of the West, of the synthesis which transcends the national boundaries of British industry, French revolution, and German philosophy, or with the East. We see that the victory of Communism would, indeed, mean the victory of originally Western natural science, but, at the same time, the victory of the most extreme form of Eastern despotism. However much the power of the West may have declined, however great the dangers to the West may be, that decline, that danger — nay, the defeat and the destruction of the West — would not necessarily prove that the West is in a crisis. The West could go down in honor, certain of its purpose.

The crisis of the West consists in the West having become uncertain of its purpose. The West was once certain of its purpose, of a purpose in which all men could be united. Hence, it had a clear vision of its future as the future of mankind. We no longer have that certainty and that clarity. Some of us even despair of the future. This despair explains many forms of contemporary Western degradation. This is not meant to imply that no society can be healthy unless it is dedicated to a universal purpose, to a purpose in which all men can be united. A society may be tribal and yet healthy. But a society which was accustomed to understand itself in terms of a universal purpose cannot lose faith in that purpose without becoming completely bewildered. We find such a universal purpose expressly stated in our immediate past; for instance, in famous official declarations made during the two world wars. These declarations merely restate the purpose stated originally by the most successful form of modern political philosophy: a kind of that political philosophy which aspired to build on the foundation laid by classical political philosophy, but in opposition to the structure erected by classical political philosophy, a society superior in truth and justice to the society toward which the classics aspired.

According to that modern project, philosophy or science was no longer to be understood as essentially contemplative, but as active. It was to be in the service of the relief of man's estate, to use Bacon's beautiful phrase. It was to be cultivated for the sake of human power. It was to enable man to become the master and the owner of nature through the intellectual conquest of nature. Philosophy or science, which was originally the same thing, should make possible progress toward an ever greater prosperity. Thus, everyone would share in all

the advantages of society or life, and therewith make true the full meaning of the natural right of everyone to comfortable self-preservation (Locke's phrase) and all that that right entails, and the natural right of everyone to develop all his faculties fully, in concert with everyone else's doing the same. The progress toward an ever greater prosperity would thus become, or render possible, progress toward an ever greater freedom and justice. This progress would necessarily be progress toward a society embracing equally all human beings, a universal league of free and equal nations, each nation consisting of free and equal men and women. For it had come to be believed that the prosperous, free, and just society in a single country, or in a few countries, is not possible in the long run. To make the world safe for the Western democracies, one must make the whole globe democratic, each country in itself, as well as the society of nations. Good order in one country, it was thought, presupposes good order in all countries and among all countries. The movement toward the universal society, or the universal state, was thought to be guaranteed not only by the rationality, the universal validity of the goal, but also because the movement toward that goal seemed to be the movement of the large majority of men, on behalf of the large majority of men. Only those small groups of men, who hold in thrall many millions of their fellow human beings and who defend their own antiquated interests, resist that movement.

This view of the human situation in general, and of the situation in our century in particular, retained a certain plausibility not in spite of fascism, but because of it, until Communism revealed itself even to the meanest capacities as Stalinism and post-Stalinism; for Trotskyism, being a flag without an army, and even without a general, was condemned or refuted by its own principle. For some time, it appeared to many teachable Westerners — to say nothing of the unteachable ones — that Communism was only a parallel movement to the Western movement; as it were, a somewhat impatient, wild, wayward twin who was bound to become mature, patient, and gentle. But, except when in mortal danger, Communism responded to fraternal greetings with contempt or, at most, with manifestly dissembled signs of friendship, and when in mortal danger it was as eager to receive Western help as it was determined to give no word of thanks in return. It was impossible for the Western movement to understand Communism as merely a new version of that external reaction against which it had been fighting for centuries. It had to admit that the Western project, which in its way had made provision against all earlier forms of evil, could not provide against the new form in speech or in deed. For some time, it seemed sufficient to say that while the Western movement agrees with Communism regarding the goal of the universal prosperous society of free and equal men and women, it disagrees with it regarding the means. For Communism, the end,

the common good of the whole human race being the most sacred thing, justifies any means. Whatever contributes to the achievement of the most sacred end partakes of its sacredness and is, therefore, itself sacred. Whatever hinders the achievement of that end is devilish. The murder of Lumumba was described by a Communist as a reprehensible murder, by which he implied that there can be irreprehensible murders, I suppose like the murder of Nagy.

It came to be seen, then, that there is not only a difference of degree, but of kind, between the Western movement and Communism. And this difference was seen to concern morality, the choice of means. In other words, it became clearer than it had been for some time that no bloody or unbloody change of society can eradicate the evil in man. As long as there are men, there will be malice, envy, and hatred; hence, there cannot be a society which does not have to employ coercive restraints. For the same reason, it could no longer be denied that Communism will remain as long as it lasts in fact and not merely in name: the iron rule of a tyrant which is mitigated or aggravated by its fear of palace revolutions. The only restraint in which the West can put some confidence is the tyrant's fear of the West's immense military power.

The experience of Communism has provided the Western movement with a twofold lesson: a political lesson, a lesson regarding what to expect and what to do in the foreseeable future, and a lesson regarding the principle of politics. For the foreseeable future, there cannot be a universal state, unitary or federative. Apart from the fact that there does not exist now a universal federation of nations, but only one of those nations which are called peace-loving, the federation that does exist masks the fundamental cleavage. If that federation is taken too seriously, as a milestone of man's onward march toward the perfect and, hence, universal society, one is bound to take great risks, supported by nothing but an inherited and perhaps antiquated hope, and thus endanger the very progress one endeavors to bring about. It is imaginable that in the face of the danger of thermonuclear destruction, a federation of nations, however incomplete, would outlaw wars. That is to say, wars of aggression. But this means that it acts on the assumption that all present boundaries are just, in accordance with the self-determination of nations. This assumption is a pious fraud, the fraudulence of which is more evident than its piety. In fact, the only changes of the present boundaries which are provided for are those not disagreeable to the Communists. One must also not forget the glaring disproportion between the legal equality and the factual inequality of the confederates. This factual inequality is recognized in the expression, "underdeveloped nations," an expression, I have been told, coined by Stalin. The expression implies the resolve to develop them fully. That is to say, to make them either Communist or Western. And this despite the fact that

the West claims to stand for cultural pluralism. Even if one could still contend that the Western purpose is as universal as the Communist, one must rest satisfied for the foreseeable future with a practical particularism. The situation resembles the one, as has often been said, which existed during those centuries when both Christianity and Islam each raised its claim, but each had to be satisfied with uneasily co-existing with its antagonist. All this amounts to saying that for the foreseeable future political society remains what it always has been: a partial or particular society whose most urgent and primary task is its self-preservation and whose highest task is its self-improvement. As for the meaning of self-improvement, we may observe that the same experience which has made the West doubtful of the viability of a world society has made it doubtful of the belief that affluence is a sufficient and even necessary condition of happiness and justice. Affluence does not cure the deepest evils.

I must say a few words about another ingredient of the modern project, and this needs a somewhat more detailed discussion. Very briefly, we can say that the modern project was distinguished from the earlier view by the fact that it implied that the improvement of society depends decisively on institutions, political or economic, as distinguished from the formation of character. An implication of this view was the simple separation — as distinguished from a distinction — of law from morality. Beyond positive law, there is a sphere of enlightenment indeed; that is to say, of a purely theoretical education as distinguished from moral education or formation of character. We may illustrate this by the example of one of the heroes of that modern project, by the example of Hobbes. Hobbes was, of course, not a simple absolutist who was charmed by Nero and such people. Hobbes wanted to have enlightened absolute sovereigns, “enlightened despots,” as they came to be called. But his whole construction was of such a kind that he guaranteed only the possibility and necessity of despotism. The enlightened character of the despot remained a mere matter of hope.

Now this situation is repeated in a different way in the development of modern liberal democracy. Liberal democracy claims to be responsible government, a political order in which the government is responsible to the governed. The governed, of course, also have some responsibility to the government; the governed are supposed to obey the laws. But the key point is this: in order to be responsible, the government must have no secrets from the governed. “Open covenants openly arrived at” — the famous formula of President Wilson expresses this thought most clearly. Of course, liberal democracy also means limited government, the distinction between the public and the private. Not only must the private sphere be protected by the law, but it must also be understood to be impervious to the law. The laws must protect the sphere in which everyone may act and think as he pleases, in which he may be as arbitrary and prejudiced as he likes. “My home is my

castle." But this is not simply true. My home is not simply my castle; it may be entered with a search warrant. The true place of secrecy is not the home but the voting booth. We can say the voting booth is the home of homes, the seat of sovereignty, the seat of secrecy. The sovereign consists of the individuals who are in no way responsible, who can in no way be held responsible: the irresponsible individual. This was not simply the original notion of liberal democracy. The original notion was that this sovereign individual was a conscientious individual, the individual limited and guided by his conscience.

It is perfectly clear that the conscientious individual creates the same difficulty as Hobbes' enlightened despot. You cannot give a legal definition of what constitutes the conscientious individual. You cannot limit voting rights to conscientious people as you can limit voting rights by property qualifications, literacy tests, and the like. Conscientiousness can only be fostered by non-legal means, by moral education. For this no proper provision is made, and the change in this respect is well known to all of you. This change which has taken place and is still taking place may be called the decline of liberal democracy into permissive egalitarianism. Whereas the core of liberal democracy is the conscientious individual, the core of permissive egalitarianism is the individual with his urges. We only have to take the case of the conscientious objector; whatever you may think of conscientious objectors, there is no doubt that they are people who are perfectly willing to lay down their lives for something which they regard as right. The man who wants to indulge his urges does not have the slightest intention to sacrifice his life, and hence also his urges, to the satisfaction of his urges. This is the moral decline which has taken place.

Let me illustrate this great change by another example. I have spoken at the beginning of this lecture of the concept of culture. In its original meaning, it meant *the* culture of the human mind. By virtue of a change which took place in the 19th century, it became possible to speak of culture in the plural (the cultures). What has been done on a grand scale, especially by Spengler, has been repeated on a somewhat lower level, but with at least as great effect, by such anthropologists as Ruth Benedict. What, then, does culture mean today? In anthropology and in certain parts of sociology the word, "culture," is, of course, always used in the plural, and in such a way that you have a culture of suburbia, a culture of juvenile gangs, non-delinquent and even delinquent. And you can say, according to this recent notion of culture, there is not a single human being who is not cultured because he belongs to a culture. At the same time, fortunately, the older notion is still maintained; when I made this remark some of you laughed, because when we speak of a cultured human being we still imply that not all human beings are cultured or possess culture. Looking forward to the end of the road, one can say that according

to the view now prevailing in the social sciences every human being who is not an inmate of a lunatic asylum is a cultured human being. At the frontiers of research, of which we hear so much today, we find the interesting question whether the inmates of lunatic asylums also do not have a culture of their own.

Let me now return to my argument. The doubt of the modern project, which is today quite widespread, is not merely a strong but vague feeling. It has acquired the status of scientific exactitude. One may wonder whether there is a single social scientist left who would assert that the universal and prosperous society constitutes the rational solution of the human problem. For present-day social science admits and even proclaims its inability to validate any value judgments proper. The teaching originated by modern political philosophy, those heroes of the 17th century, in favor of the universal and prosperous society has admittedly become an ideology. That is to say, a teaching not superior in truth and justice to any other among the innumerable ideologies. Social science which studies all ideologies is itself free from all ideological biases. Through this Olympian freedom it overcomes the crisis of our time. That crisis may destroy the conditions of social science; it cannot affect the validity of its findings. Social science has not always been as skeptical or as restrained as it has become during the last two generations. The change in the character of social science is not unconnected with the change in the status of the modern project. The modern project was originated by philosophers, and it was originated as something required by nature, by natural rights. The project was meant to satisfy, in the most perfect manner, the most powerful and natural needs of men. Nature was to be conquered for the sake of man, who was supposed to possess a nature, an unchangeable nature. The originators of the project took it for granted that philosophy and science are identical. After some time, it appeared that the conquest of nature requires the conquest of human nature too and, in the first place, the questioning of the unchangeability of human nature. After all, an unchangeable human nature might set absolute limits to progress. Accordingly, the natural needs of men could no longer direct the conquest of nature. The direction had to come from reason as distinguished from nature, from the rational "Ought" as distinguished from the neutral "Is." Thus, philosophy, logic, ethics, aesthetics, as the study of the "Ought" or the norms, became separated from science as the study of the "Is." While the study of the "Is," or science, succeeded ever more in increasing man's power, the ensuing discredit of reason precluded distinction between the wise, or right, and the foolish, or wrong, use of power. Science, separated from philosophy, cannot teach wisdom. There are still some people who believe that this predicament will disappear as soon as social science and psychology have caught up with physics and chemistry. This belief is wholly unreasonable. For social science and

psychology, however perfected, being sciences, can only bring about a still further increase of man's power. They will enable man to manipulate men still better than ever before. They will as little teach man how to use his power over men or non-men as physics and chemistry do. The people who indulge this hope have not grasped the bearing of the distinction between facts and values, which they preach all the time. This is, indeed, the core of modern science, of modern social science as it has finally developed in the last two generations: the distinction between facts and values, with the understanding that no distinction between good or bad values is rationally possible. Any end is as defensible as any other. From the point of view of reason, all values are equal. The task with which academic teachers in the social sciences are concerned is primarily to face this issue posed by the fact-value distinction. I believe that one can show that this fundamental premise of the present-day social sciences is untenable, and that one can show it on a variety of grounds. But I am now concerned with a somewhat broader issue.

When we reflect on the fact-value distinction, we see one element of it which is quite striking. The citizen does not make the fact-value distinction. He is as sure that he can reasonably distinguish between good and bad, just and unjust, as he can distinguish between true and false, or as he can judge so-called factual statements. The distinction between facts and values is alien to the citizen's understanding of political things. The distinction between facts and values becomes necessary, it seems, only when the citizen's understanding of political things is replaced by the specifically scientific understanding. The scientific understanding implies, then, a break with the pre-scientific understanding. Yet, at the same time, it remains dependent on the pre-scientific understanding. I may illustrate this by a most simple example. If someone is sent out by a sociology department to interview people, he is taught all kinds of things; he is given very detailed instructions. But one thing he is not told: address your questions to people, to human beings, and not to dogs, trees, cats, and so on. Furthermore, he is not even told how to tell human beings from dogs. This knowledge is presupposed. It is never changed, never refined, never affected by anything he learns in social science classes. This is only the most massive example of how much allegedly self-sufficient scientific knowledge presupposes of "a priori" knowledge, of pre-scientific knowledge which is not questioned for one moment in the whole process of science. Now, regardless of whether the superiority of the scientific understanding to the pre-scientific understanding can be demonstrated or not, the scientific understanding is surely secondary or derivative. Hence, social science cannot reach clarity about its doings if it does not dispose of a coherent and comprehensive understanding of what one may call the common sense understanding of political things which precedes all scientific under-

standing; in other words, if we do not primarily understand political things as they are experienced by the citizen or statesman. Only if it disposes of such a coherent and comprehensive understanding of its basis or matrix can it possibly show the legitimacy and make intelligible the character of that peculiar modification of the primary understanding of political things which is the scientific understanding. This, I believe, is an evident necessity if social science or political science is to be or to become a rational enterprise. . Being a modification of the primary understanding of political things, it must be understood as such a modification. We must understand the pre-scientific, the common sense understanding, the citizen's understanding of political things before we can truly understand what the modification effected by scientific understanding means.

But how can we get that understanding? How can our poor powers be sufficient for an elaboration of the pre-scientific primary citizens' understanding of political things? Fortunately for us, this terrific burden, the most basic work which can be done and must be done in order to make political science and, therefore, also the other social sciences truly sciences, rational enterprises, has been done. As in a way every one of you knows, it has been done by Aristotle in his *Politics*. That work supplies us with the classic and unforgettable analysis of the primary understanding of political phenomena.

This assertion is exposed to a very great variety of seemingly devastating objections. I shall devote tomorrow's political lecture to a presentation of what this enterprise, Aristotelian political science, means. I would like to devote the rest of this lecture to a strict *ad hominem* argument in order to lead, as it were, the now preponderant part in the profession, the so-called behavioralists, if they are willing to listen to an argument, to a somewhat better understanding of what they would do if they were well advised. When you look around yourself, not at the University of Detroit, not at other Catholic institutions, but at non-Catholic institutions, I think you can say that with very few exceptions political philosophy has disappeared. Political philosophy, the decay of political philosophy into ideology, reveals itself today most obviously in the fact that in both research and teaching political philosophy has been replaced by the history of political philosophy. Many of you have read or used the famous work by Sabine, and you only have to read the preface of Sabine to see that what I am going to say is simply correct. Now, what does this substitution of the history of political philosophy for political philosophy mean? It is, strictly speaking, absurd to replace political philosophy by the history of political philosophy. It means to replace a doctrine which claims to be true by a survey of errors, and that is exactly what Sabine, for example, does. So, political philosophy cannot be replaced by the history of political philosophy.

The discipline which takes the place of political philosophy is the one which shows the impossibility of political philosophy, and that discipline is, of course, logic. What, for the time being, is still tolerated under the name, "history of political philosophy," will find its place within a rational scheme of research and teaching in footnotes to the chapters in logic textbooks which deal with the distinction between factual judgments and value judgments. These footnotes will supply slow learners with examples of the faulty transition by which political philosophy stands or falls, from factual judgments to value judgments. They will give examples from Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hume, or Rousseau and will show when and where these famous men committed a blunder which every ten-year-old child now knows how to avoid. Yet, it would be wrong to believe that in the new dispensation, according to the demands of logical positivism or behaviorial science, the place once occupied by political philosophy is filled entirely by logic, however enlarged. A considerable part of the matter formerly treated by political philosophy is now treated by non-philosophic political science, which forms part of social science. This new political science is concerned with discovering laws of political behavior and, ultimately, universal laws of political behavior. Lest it mistake the peculiarities of the politics of the times and the places in which social science is at home for the character of all politics, it must study also the politics of other climes and other ages. The new political science thus becomes dependent upon a kind of study which belongs to the comprehensive enterprise called universal history. Now, it is controversial whether history can be modeled on the natural sciences or not, and, therefore, whether the aspiration of the new political science to become scientific in the sense of the natural sciences is sound.

At any rate, the historical studies in which the new political science must engage must become concerned not only with the workings of institutions, but with the ideologies informing these institutions as well. Within the context of these studies, the meaning of an ideology is primarily the meaning in which its adherents understand it. In some cases, the ideologies are known to have been originated by outstanding men. In these cases, it becomes necessary to consider whether and how the ideology as conceived by the originator was modified by its adherents. For, precisely, if only the crude understanding of ideologies can be politically effective, it is necessary to grasp the characteristics of crude understanding. If what they call the routinization of charisma is a permitted theme, the vulgarization of thought ought to be a permitted theme also. One kind of ideology consists of the teachings of the political philosophers. These teachings may have played only a minor political role, but one cannot know this before one knows these doctrines solidly. This solid knowledge consists primarily in understanding the teachings of the political philosophers as they themselves meant them. Surely, every one of them was mistaken in be-

lieving that his teaching was a sound teaching regarding political things. Through a reliable tradition we know that this belief forms part of a rationalization, but the process of rationalization is not so thoroughly understood that it would not be worthwhile to study it in the case of the greatest minds. For all we know, there may be various kinds of rationalizations, etc., etc. It is, then, necessary to study the political philosophies, not only as they were understood by their originators, in contradistinction to the way in which they were understood by their adherents and various kinds of their adherents, but also by their adversaries and even by detached or indifferent bystanders or historians. For indifference does not offer a sufficient guarantee against the danger that one identifies the view of the originator with a compromise between the views of his adherents and those of his adversaries. The general understanding of the political philosophies which is then absolutely necessary on the basis of behavioral political science may be said to have been rendered possible today by the shaking of all traditions; the crisis of our time may have the accidental advantage of enabling us to understand in an untraditional, a fresh, manner what was hitherto understood only in a traditional, derivative manner.

Social science, then, will not live up to its claim if it does not concern itself with the genuine understanding of the political philosophies proper, and therewith, primarily because it comes first, of classical political philosophy. As I indicated, such an understanding cannot be presumed to be available. It is sometimes asserted today that such an understanding is not even possible because all historical understanding is relative to the point of view of the historian, his country, his time. The historian cannot understand, it is said, the teaching as it was meant by its originator, but he necessarily understands it differently than its originator understood it. Ordinarily, the historian's understanding is inferior to the originator's understanding. In the best case, the understanding will be a creative transformation of the original teaching. Yet, it is hard to see how one can speak of the creative transformation of the original teaching if it is not possible to grasp the original teaching as such.

Be this as it may, the following point seems to be of crucial importance. To the extent to which the social scientist succeeds in this kind of study, which is required of him by the demands of his own science, he not only enlarges the horizon of present-day social science; he even transcends the limitations of that social science. For he learns to look at things in a manner which is, as it were, forbidden to the social scientist. He will have learned from his logic that his science rests on certain hypotheses, certainties, or assumptions. He learns now to suspend these assumptions because, as long as he maintains them, he has no access to his subject matter. He is thus compelled to make the assumptions of social science his theme. Far from being merely one of the innumerable themes of social science, history of political

philosophy, and not logic, proves to be the pursuit concerned with the presuppositions of social science. These presuppositions prove to be modifications of the principles of modern political philosophy, which, in their turn, prove to be modifications of the principles of classical political philosophy. To the extent to which a behavioral political scientist takes his science and its requirements seriously, he is compelled to engage in such a study, in such a historical study of his own discipline, and he cannot conduct that study without questioning the dogmatic premises of his own science. Therewith, his horizon is enlarged. He must at least consider the possibility that the older political science was sounder and truer than what is regarded as political science today.

Such a return to classical political philosophy is both necessary and tentative or experimental. Not in spite, but because it is tentative, it must be carried out seriously; that is to say, without squinting at our present-day predicament. There is no danger that we can ever become oblivious of this predicament, since that predicament is the incentive to our whole concern with the classics. We cannot reasonably expect that a fresh understanding of classical political philosophy will supply us with recipes for today's use. The relative success of modern political philosophy has brought into being a kind of society wholly unknown to the classics, a kind of society in which the classical principles as stated and elaborated by the classics are not immediately applicable. Only we living today can possibly find a solution to the problems of today. An adequate understanding of the principles, as elaborated by the classics, may be the indispensable starting point for an adequate analysis, to be achieved by us, of present-day society in its peculiar character, and for the wise application, to be achieved by us, of these principles to our tasks.